

# VETERANS JOURNAL



PUBLISHED BY  
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## *Commissioners:*

*Tom Eshelman, AL*  
*Jeffrey D. Noble, VFW*  
*Merle Pratt, DAV*  
*Michael Kehoe, VVA*  
*Dennis M. McCarthy, AMVETS*

*Spring 2016 Issue*

*Buck Bramlish, Director*  
*John C. Warrix, Assistant Director*

This journal is provided to make the veteran community aware of some current events, activities and veteran's issues that are of mutual concern. From time to time, we will include some relevant information important enough to be repeated to insure that veterans and their families are aware of the full range of benefits and entitlements available to them.

# SPRING



*Green Grass*

*Afternoon Rain Showers*

*Open Windows*

*Cold Ice Cream*

*Evening Walks*

*Picnics in the Park*

*Warm Sunshine*

*Pretty Flowers*

*Happy Springtime*



## **“Franklin County Veterans Service Commission Welcomes Mr. Buck Bramlish as New Director”**



On behalf of the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission we are pleased to announce that the Commissioners have selected Mr. Buck Bramlish to join our agency. He started on Monday, February 8, 2016 as our Director. Director Bramlish is a skilled dedicated professional with 34 years military experience and a successful record of accomplishments in leadership, program management, workforce development, and administration. He is currently retiring from the Ohio Army National Guard where he served as the Director of Operations for the past five

years. Previously, Mr. Bramlish served as the National Guard's Director of Family Programs and Warrior Support, developing statewide programs to provide relief and assistance to service members and their families. In both of these roles he spent countless hours working with local, state and national governmental and non-governmental organizations which were focused on training soldiers or providing support to veterans and their families. He served as a national leader advising the National Guard Bureau on Family Readiness programs and was the advisory council national chair for all state National Guard operation directors. He is committed to high work ethics and to the attainment of agency goals and objectives while ensuring a positive climate based on mutual trust and respect. He looks





**“Franklin County Veterans  
Service Commission Welcomes  
Mr. Buck Bramlisch as New  
Director”**

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forward to using his problem-solving, financial management and decision-making skills, as a civilian leader supporting veterans and their families.

Director Bramlisch earned a B.S. in Education from Bowling Green State University, and holds Master’s degrees from Trident University and the U.S. Army War College.

He resides in Ostrander with his lovely wife Deb, and their two children, Reagan and Jake.

**“New Commissioner”**



**Lieutenant General Dennis McCarthy** is a Principal in Military Experts, LLC, a consulting firm that advises businesses and attorneys nationwide on military issues. He was nominated by President Obama to be a member of the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force and serves as its Chairman. He is of counsel to McCarthy Law Offices in Columbus, Ohio.

Dennis began his Marine Corps service as a platoon leader in Vietnam, and completed it as Commander of Marine Forces Reserve, having led that force for four years during the Corps’ largest reserve mobilization in history. He retired in 2005 as the Marine Corps’ senior Lieutenant General with over 40 years of active and reserve service.

After completing his service in uniform, he was Executive Director of the Reserve Officers Association of the United States, a 60,000 member professional association in Washington, D.C. In 2009, he was nominated by President Obama and confirmed by the Senate to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

As Assistant Secretary of Defense, he was responsible for policy development and execution for over one million members of the National Guard and Reserves of all services. He was also responsible for the activities of the National Committee for Employer Support of Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense entity tasked with establishing and maintaining positive relationships with the nation’s large and small employers whose support is so essential to members of the Guard and Reserve. His office also supervised activities relating to reserve mobilization, training, and facilities. He worked closely with key budget officials, with Members of Congress and with Congressional Committee staffs.

From 1978 to 1999 while serving in the Marine Corps Reserve, Dennis was a civil trial lawyer in Columbus, Ohio and was managing partner of his own

firm. He was Board Certified by the National Board of Trial Advocacy; an Adjunct Faculty member at Capital University Law School; a leader in state and national legal organizations; and a frequent CLE lecturer and contributor.

Dennis graduated from the University of Dayton and the Capital University Law School. In 2010, he was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree by Capital University Law School, and was named the Distinguished Alumnus for 2011. He currently serves on several advisory boards. Prior to his return to government service, he was Vice Chairman of the Board of Medifast, Inc. (NYSE: MED) and was a member of the Board of Directors of Rivada Networks, Inc.



**“Thank You”**

**John W. Maurer**  
*United States Marine Corps*

John W. Maurer resigned from the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission after serving three years from 2013 – 2015. Thanks for your service to our Commission, *Semper Fi*.





### **“Ohio Veterans Honored for Helping Liberate France in World War II”**



Four Ohio World War II Veterans were awarded France’s Medal of Knight of the Legion in a ceremony at the Ohio State House, State Reception Room.

- ~ Neal W. Burdett, 90  
Lancaster, Ohio
- ~ Bernard M. Eshelman, 91  
Columbus, Ohio
- ~ Vernon C. Miller, 89  
Huber Heights, Ohio
- ~ George Zwahlen, 94  
Hopewell, Ohio

[Source: Galion Inquirer | December 10, 2015]

### **“Law Change Ends Reserve Tuition Program (REAP)”**



Students already enrolled in courses through the Reserve Educational Assistance Program will see no disruption in their tuition payments, but they will have to turn out the lights after classes end. That’s because REAP officials won’t be accepting new enrollments. The 2016 Defense Authorization Act

signed into law before Thanksgiving ended the program, leaving only a four-year window for current participants to finish their degree programs.

Individuals who are enrolled and attending classes through the now-defunct program are eligible to continue receiving benefits until Nov. 25, 2019. Additional information on the program change is available on VA’s website

<http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/reap.asp>.

[Source: Military Times, Leo Shane III, Staff writer | December 30, 2015]

### **“VA Proposed Changes to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – (A073) Update”**

There have been many rumors and misinformation shared since the VA proposed changes to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) about a year ago (A073) as it pertains to Non-Service Connected Pension Benefits.

A073 was published on January 23, 2015. This proposed change sought to address concerns published in a Governmental Accountability Office report, issues presented at a U.S. Senate Hearing on Pension Poaching and in order to maintain the integrity of the Non-Service Connected Pension Benefits for veterans and surviving spouses. During the past year the DVA’s Pension and Fiduciary Services Department has been taking into account the more than 850 comments made concerning this proposed amendment, as well as seeking advisement and comments from the Congress, the Senate, the DVA Chain of Command, DVA General

Counsel and other stake holders. The VA plans to publish an amended version of A073 this spring with the Federal Register. The changes must go through a concurrence process through the DVA. The DVA plans for the changes to become law at some point in the summer of 2016. There will no doubt be many legal questions as a result of the new regulation that will need to be worked though after the implementation of the law. For full transcript and updates go to the following website: <http://www.cfevr.org/category/un-categorized/latest-news-impacting-veterans-families/>

[Source: The Center for Elder Veterans Rights, Kristen Vanderkooi, Esq. <http://www.cfevr.org/proposed-changes-in-regulation-2016/>]

### **“DoD Fertility Services”**

Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced 28 JAN that the Pentagon will start covering sperm and egg freezing for troops who want to preserve their gametes for future use. The two-year pilot program will cover the cost of freezing sperm or eggs through Tricare for service members who request it and troops anticipating deployment. After the test program is complete, DoD will assess its impact, including cost and recruiting and retention benefits, and either renew the program or allow service members to pay out of pocket for continued storage.

[Resource: Patricia Kime, Military Times | January 29, 2016]





### “The Defense Department Changes”

The Defense Department is increasing military maternity leave and instituting other changes in an effort to support military families, improve retention and strengthen the force of the future, Defense Secretary Ash Carter said.

- Parental Leave, Support for New Parents
- Increasing Hours of Military Child Care
- Remain at Current Locations w/Additional Obligations
- Greater Flexibility in Family Planning

These are more tools to make the military a family-friendly employer that honors the desires of those who want to commit fully to their careers or serve courageously in combat, while preserving their ability to have children in the future.

For more information on the article go to:  
<http://www.defense.gov/News-Article-View/Article/645958/carter-announces-12-weeks-paid-military-maternity-leave-other-benefits>.

[Resource: Lisa Ferdinando DoD News, Defense Media Activity | January 28, 2016]

### “Cost-free Veteran ID Cards”

Franklin County Recorder, Terry J. Brown announced that he will eliminate the \$1 fee for the popular Veteran ID Card program his office launched in 2103, making the program completely free of charge.

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners agreed to remove the \$1 fee for the Recorder’s Office Veteran ID Card program. This ends the need for the non-profit Disabled Veterans of America Chapter 3 Capital City to raise and donate funds to hold in escrow to cover the fees for homeless and low-income veterans.

The Veteran ID cards are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Franklin County Recorder’s Office on the 18<sup>th</sup> floor of the Franklin County Government Center, 373 South High St., Columbus, Ohio 43215. There will also be a public event on Saturday, March 12, 2016 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Fraternal Order of Police Capital City Lodge #9, 6800 Schrock Hill Ct., Columbus, Ohio 43229. To obtain a Veteran ID card, the veteran must record or have previously recorded their original or certified DD214 and bring 2 forms of ID. More information is available at <http://Recorder.FranklinCountyOhio.gov>.

The Franklin County Recorder’s Office was the second county in the state of Ohio to issue Veteran ID cards in 2013. Since then Recorder Brown and his team have worked with other counties

across the state to implement their own Veteran ID card program. The Veteran ID card program is now available in 34 counties and to over 55 percent of Ohio’s veterans in the counties in which they live.

[Resource: Terry J. Brown, Franklin County Recorder | February 16, 2016]



*“Sail away from  
the safe harbor.  
Catch the trade  
winds in your sails.  
Explore. Dream.  
Discover.”*

*~ Mark Twain*



### “New Laws”

**H.R. 91:** Veteran’s ID Card Act

**H.R. 203:** Clay Hunt SAV Act

**H.R. 313:** Wounded Warriors  
Federal Leave Act of 2015

**H.R. 2499:** Veterans  
Entrepreneurship Act of 2015

**H.R. 2835:** Border Jobs for  
Veterans Act of 2015

**H.R. 3236:** Surface  
Transportation and Veterans  
Health Care Choice

Improvement Act of 2015

**S.136:** Gold Star Fathers Act of  
2015

**S.242:** Wounded Warriors  
Federal Leave Act of 2015



~ Newsworthy ~

\* **Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)** – The National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2016 amended the SBP statute to allow members to elect to cover their current spouse coverage following the death of their former spouse.

\* **Vets Commercial Driver's License** – CDL Skills Test Waiver. Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration website at <https://fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/commercial-drivers-license/military> or contact your state department of safety or transportation. Application for waiver can be downloaded at <https://fmcsa.dot.gov/registration/commercial-drivers-license/application-military-skills-test-waiver>.

\* **OPM Data Breach** – About 21.5 million federal employees, contractors, and retirees were affected by the breach last summer. To verify go to the OPM Verify Site at <https://opmverify.dmdc.osd.mil>.

\* **2015 Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act** – The new law provides a full year's sick leave up front to new federal employees who are disabled veterans only, applies to those hired on, or after Nov. 5, 2016.

\* **VA Handbook 2016** – Go to [http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits\\_book.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits_book.asp) to access the 2016 Edition of the VA Handbook.

\* **VA's Website for Elder Veterans and their Family Caregivers** – Here are three websites:

[www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/Guide/LongTermCare/Shared Decision Making Worksheet.pdf](http://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/Guide/LongTermCare/SharedDecisionMakingWorksheet.pdf),  
[www.va.gov/geriatrics/Guide/LongTermCare/Advance Care Planning.asp](http://www.va.gov/geriatrics/Guide/LongTermCare/AdvanceCarePlanning.asp), and  
[www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/Guide/LongTermCare/Shared Decision Making Worksheet.pdf](http://www.va.gov/GERIATRICS/Guide/LongTermCare/SharedDecisionMakingWorksheet.pdf).

\* **"Fast Track" Tool** – A new online tool at [www.fasttrackforheroes.org](http://www.fasttrackforheroes.org) is available to help veterans and servicemembers translate their military skills into civilian careers.

\* **Agricultural Training for Veterans** – Go to [www.nal.usda.gov/veteran-farmers](http://www.nal.usda.gov/veteran-farmers).

\* **Personalize Your Newsfeed with Military News App** – Military.com launched a new app that delivers top United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard news alongside benefit updates.

\* **Navy Apps** – The "New to the Navy" mobile application app geared toward new sailors and answers many frequently asked questions about pay and personnel matters. And the new Operations Security (OPSEC) General Military Training (GMT) app gives sailors an alternative to completing their required GMT anytime and anywhere.

\* **AARP Foundation Senior Community Service Employment Program** – Helps unemployed Franklin, Delaware, and Licking County workers age 55 and over secure employment. Age, income, and residency requirements apply. Call 614-258-7295 or 614-322-0600, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

\* **First USO Center to Open at Wright Patterson AFB** – Active-duty military, Guard, Reservists and their families at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base will have a new "home away from home" due to a significant project undertaken by the United Service Organization of Central and Southern Ohio (USO-CSO) at the base's former Community and Airmen Center, Bldg. 1222, Kittyhawk Center, Area A. which opened their doors on Saturday, February 27, 2016 from noon until midnight.

Those interested in volunteering may log onto the website [usovolunteer.org](http://usovolunteer.org). Donations may be made at [usocso.org](http://usocso.org).

\* **USO 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** – President Franklin Delano Roosevelt forged the creation of the United States Organizations for National Defense in February 1941. ON★PATROL 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Issue is available at <http://bit.ly/OnPatrol75>.

*Be Happy  
Be Yourself  
If others don't like it,  
Then let them be.  
Happiness is a choice.  
Life isn't about  
Pleasing everybody.*



## Tax Resources



- ~ IRS.gov (Downloadable Publications)
- ~ IRS.gov/Individuals/Military
- ~ Publication 3, Armed Forces' Tax Guide
- ~ IRS YouTube Video "Military Tax Tips"
- ~ MilitaryOneSource.mil with H&R Block
- ~ Military Veterans Resource Center, appointment only
- ~ MyFreeTaxes.com
- ~ TurboTax Freedom and Military Editions
- ~ H&R Block's Free File (50 & Older as of December 31, 2015 and making < \$62,000/year)
- ~ Taxslayer.com
- ~ Taxtimecentralohio.org or call 2-1-1 for locations and appointments
- ~ Ohio Society of Certified Public Accountants, ohio CPA.com (Currently serving or deployed outside the U.S.)
- ~ IRS.gov/Individuals/Military
- ~ [www.tax.ohio.gov](http://www.tax.ohio.gov).



## "Military Veterans Resource Center Offering Free Tax Filing Assistance to Veterans"

Military Veterans Resource Center will offer free tax filing assistance to veterans!

**Dates:** January – April 15, 2016

**Details:** In partnership with the Ohio Benefit Bank, Military Veterans Resource Center will provide free income tax filing assistance for eligible military veterans, spouses and dependents throughout the 2016 tax season. In order to qualify for this service, veterans filing jointly must have an income that does not exceed 95,000; those not filing jointly must have an income that does not exceed \$65,000. When veterans arrive at their appointment, they will need to have a photo ID, their DD-214 (or other evidence of military service) and their income tax records.

**Contact:** To set up an appointment, contact your nearest resource center for assistance.

*Columbus – 614-230-0662*

*Chillicothe – 740-835-5145*

*Dayton – 937-329-9559*

*Findlay – 419-516-0411*

*Hamilton – 513-252-2395*

*Anyone who meets the Ohio Benefit Bank's income requirements can take advantage of the free tax filing service through the self-serve option on Military Veterans Resource Center's Ohio Benefit Bank page. Starting in January, visit:*

*[https://selfserve.thebenefitbank.org/ums?partner\\_code=5795](https://selfserve.thebenefitbank.org/ums?partner_code=5795) to file your 2015 income taxes.*

## Upcoming Events....

### March

\* **RecruitMilitary, Thursday, March 31, 2016.** Veterans Career Fair at the Fawcett Center from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m.

### APRIL

\* **DAV Information Seminar – Kirkland, Ohio, Saturday, April 9, 2016.** At the Lakeland Community College, 7700 Clocktower Drive from 1000-1300.

### May

\* **Veterans Stand Down – Sandusky, Ohio, Thursday, May 26, 2016.** Located at AMVETS POST #17, 307 Putnam Street, Sandusky, Ohio 44870 from 1000-1300.



## "2016 National Defense Act Education and GI Bill Changes"

1. Reserve Reintegration Programs - Four Paid training sessions.
2. Expansion of Education Counseling During Out-briefing.
3. No More Unemployment While Getting the GI Bill. For more information go to: <http://www.americansentinel.edu/blog/2016/01/01/2016-national-defense-act-changes-education-and-gi-benefits/>.

[Resource: HTimothy, The Sentinel Watch – Healthcare Management | January 1, 2016]





## "Spring Cleaning"



1. Check Fluids
2. Cap, Label, and Raise-up
3. Ventilate
4. Check Alarms
5. Clean-up Clutter
6. Separate for Safety
7. Prepare for an Emergency
8. Check Appliances



Life is like a camera...  
*Focus* on what's important,  
*Capture* the good times,  
*Develop* from the negatives,  
And if things don't work out,  
*Take another shot.*

## "Ways to Observe Memorial Day"

Memorial Day reminds us of our duties towards the wounded soldiers and the bereaved families, orphans, widows, and widowers of the dead soldiers. We should honor the dead by adorning their sacred remains with flowers and garlands and show our gratitude towards them in the following ways:

~ Adorning the graves of the soldiers with flags or flowers.

~ Visiting cemeteries and memorials.

~ Furling the American Flag at half-mast until noon.

~ Furling the 'POW/MIA Flag.'

~ Keep silence for a minute at 3 p.m., 'National Moment of Remembrance' and listen to Taps being played.

~ Take a pledge to aid the disabled veterans, widows, widowers, and orphans of the dead and keep it.

~ Offering thanks to the veterans and appreciating the ultimate sacrifices of the soldiers to the bereaved families personally may help too.

## "Memorial Day"

By C W Johnson



We walked among the crosses where our fallen soldiers lay.

And listened to the bugle as TAPS began to play.  
The Chaplin led a prayer we stood with our heads bowed low.

And I thought of fallen comrades I had known so long ago.

They came from every city across this fertile land.

That we might live in freedom.

They lie here 'neath the sand.

I felt a little guilty my sacrifice was small.  
I only lost a little time but these men lost their all.

Now the services are over for this Memorial Day.

To the names upon these crosses I just want to say,

Thanks for what you've given no one could ask for more. May you rest with God in heaven from now through evermore.



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